

Stay at Home Toolkit

for Influenza



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Stay at Home Toolkit

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Preventing the Spread of Influenza



Most persons with the flu will be able to remain at home while they are sick. They can care for themselves or be cared for by others who live in the household. This information is intended to help recognize the symptoms of influenza and care for ill persons in the home, both during a typical influenza season and during an influenza pandemic.

At the outset of an influenza pandemic, a vaccine may not be available for several months. However, it's still a good idea to get seasonal flu vaccine (a shot or nasal mist) to protect from seasonal flu viruses.

Know the *symptoms of Influenza*, which may include:

Sudden onset of illness	Chills
Cough	Fever higher than 100.4 °F
Headache	Sore throat
Stuffy nose	Muscle aches
Feeling of weakness	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and/or exhaustion occur more commonly in children.

Prevent the Spread of Illness in the House

Flu can spread easily from person to person therefore, anyone living in or visiting a home where someone has influenza can become infected. For this reason, it is important to take steps to prevent the spread of influenza to others in the home.

What Caregivers Can Do

Caregivers need to separate flu patients from other people as much as possible. When practical, the ill person should stay in a separate room away from other persons. Other people living in the home should limit contact with the ill person as much as possible. One person in the household should be the main caregiver for the ill person. Ideally, this caregiver should be healthy and not have medical conditions that would put him or her at risk of severe influenza disease.

Medical conditions considered “High Risk” include:

- Pregnant
- Heart problems
- Chronic lung disease
- Disease or treatment that suppresses the immune system.
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Over 65 years of age

Preventing the Spread of Influenza

Watch for Influenza in Other Household Members

If possible, contact your health care provider if you have questions about caring for the ill person. However, it may be difficult to contact your usual health care provider during an influenza pandemic. The Panhandle Health District website (<http://www.phd1.idaho.gov>) will provide frequent updates, including how to get medical advice. If special telephone hotlines are used, these numbers will also be on the website and announced through the media.



Wearing surgical masks (with ties) or procedure masks (with ear loops) may be useful in decreasing spread of influenza when worn by the person and/or caregiver during close contact (within 3 feet). If masks are recommended by Panhandle Health District, to be useful they must be worn at all times when in close contact with the person with the flu. Throw away mask after each use. Wearing gloves and gowns **are not** recommended for household members providing care in the home.

What Everyone in the Household Can Do

- Wash hands with soap and warm water, or if soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after each contact with a person with the flu or with objects in the area where the person is located. **WASHING YOUR HANDS IS THE SINGLE BEST PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR EVERYONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.**
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth without first washing your hands for 20 seconds. Wash hands before and after using the bathroom.
- Wash dirty dishes either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. It's not necessary to separate eating utensils used by a person with influenza.
- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen and laundry used by a person with influenza from other household laundry. Do not hold or carry the laundry close to your body or face, in order to avoid contamination. Wash hands with soap and water after handling the laundry.
- Place tissues used by the ill person in a bag and throw it away with other household trash. Consider placing a bag at the bedside for this purpose.
- Clean counters, toilets, sinks, railings, doorknobs, telephones, remote controls, and any common surfaces in the home regularly using a disinfectant cleaner. (See page 8.)

Preventing the Spread of Influenza

Prevent the Spread of Illness in the Community

- Stay at home if you are sick. Ill persons should not leave the home until they have recovered because they can spread the infection to others.
 - In a typical flu season, persons with the flu should limit or avoid contact with others for about five days after exposure to the illness.
 - During an influenza pandemic, public health authorities will provide information on how long persons with influenza should remain at home.

If an ill person *must* leave home (such as for medical care), he or she should wear a surgical or procedure mask, if recommended, and do the following:

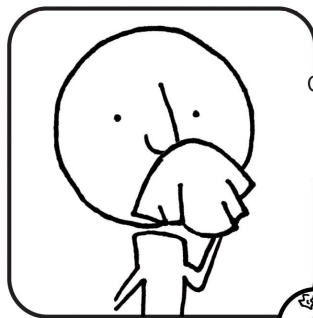


- Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using tissues or the crook of the elbow instead of the hands.
 - Use tissues to contain mucous and watery discharge from the mouth and nose.
 - Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste bin after use or carry a small plastic bag for used tissues.
 - Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after covering your mouth for a cough or sneeze, after wiping or blowing your nose and after handling contaminated objects and materials, including tissues.
- You and your loved ones may want to use the Internet as a primary resource. The Internet can serve as a link to outside resources such as: up-to-date information on influenza, medical and social services, and access to food delivery services.
 - During an influenza pandemic, only people who are essential for person care or support should enter a home where someone is ill with influenza unless they have already had influenza.
 - If other persons must enter the home, they should avoid close contact with the person and use the recommended infection control precautions.

Cover Your Cough

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

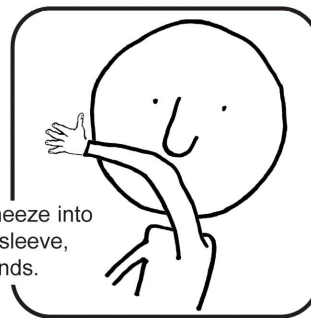
Cover your Cough



Cover your mouth
and nose with a
tissue when you
cough or sneeze

or

cough or sneeze into
your upper sleeve,
not your hands.

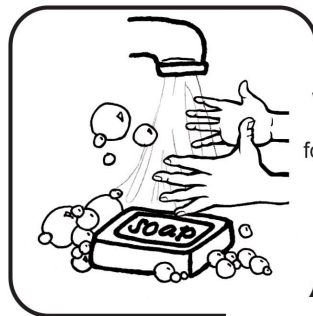


Put your used tissue in
the waste basket.



Clean your Hands

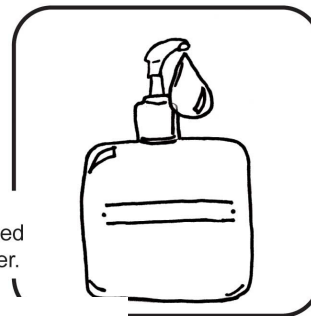
after coughing or sneezing.



Wash hands
with soap and
warm water
for 20 seconds

or

clean with
alcohol-based
hand cleaner.



WITH HEDGECOCK, WITH JUNE 17th
612-676-5414 or 1-877-676-5414
www.health.state.mn.us



Wash Your Hands



Wash hands with soap and water, or if soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after each contact with a person with the flu or with objects in the area where the person is located. **WASHING YOUR HANDS IS THE SINGLE BEST PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR EVERYONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.**

Maintain a Healthy Body and Mind

Things to remember when trying to understand an influenza outbreak or pandemic:

- It is normal to worry about yourself and your family's safety.
- Everyone is touched by an influenza outbreak or pandemic.
- Grief and anger are normal reactions.
- Focusing on your strengths will help you heal.
- Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping.

Common reactions that may occur during an influenza outbreak or pandemic:

- Difficulty talking, sleeping, walking and concentrating.
- Depression, sadness, mood swings and crying.
- Feelings of helplessness or lack of control.
- Worries about loss of income and job protection.
- Concerns about those who depend on you for care.
- Fears of separation from life activities.



How to keep healthy when staying at home:

- Learn as much as you can about pandemic flu, and be aware of the warning signs.
- Keep to your normal routine as much as possible.
- Stay in touch with family and friends, remembering to use the recommended infection control precautions.
- Get plenty of rest, try to exercise your mind and body and eat healthy.
- Keep your living space as comfortable as possible.
- If your self-help strategies are not working, or you are having a difficult time trying to cope, contact your community's spiritual or mental health counseling resources.

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Maintain a Healthy Body and Mind

Pay Special Attention to Children

- Let children know it is okay to feel upset when something scary happens.
- Encourage children to express their feelings or thoughts without making judgment.
- Enjoy spending time with your child and take part in activities together.
- Try not to let your child sense your own worries.

How to Use a Thermometer

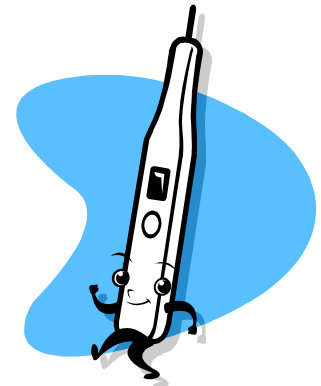
An electronic digital thermometer with a number readout is preferred over the traditional mercury filled medical thermometer.

Oral Use

- Place the end of the thermometer well under the tongue.
- The mouth should remain closed. Do not bite down.
- When you hear the “beep” remove the thermometer.
- Read the numbers on the screen. Normal is 98.6 °F.

Underarm Use

- Place the end of the thermometer in the armpit so that the probe touches the skin. Hold the arm next to the body.
- When you hear the “beep” remove the thermometer.
- Read the numbers on the screen. Normal is 98.6 °F.



How to Clean the Thermometer

- Use alcohol wipes or a cotton ball saturated with 70% rubbing or Isopropyl alcohol.
- Rub over the entire thermometer.
- Dry the thermometer with a clean dry cloth or cotton ball.
- Never return an unclean thermometer to the storage case.

Check the person's temperature using a digital thermometer at least once every 12 hours or twice daily. If their temperature is above 102 °F, give them a fever reducer such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen as directed. Continue to check their temperature more frequently until their fever is below 102 °F and then return to twice daily. Remember, a fever is the body's way of fighting off the infection, but should be maintained below 102 °F.

If taking many temperatures use a plastic over for the end of the thermometer. **Do not** reuse thermometer covers.

Taking temperatures rectally is recommended for babies and young children using a rectal thermometer. Instructions for this method should be on the rectal thermometer package.

Disinfection

It is important to clean surfaces regularly such as counters, toilets and sinks, railings, telephones, remote controls, or any common surface areas in your home.

Disinfectant	Recommended Use	Precautions
<p>Household bleach may be used in a 1 to 10 ratio with water. For example, to make 1 quart of disinfectant, mix 1/3 cup bleach with 3 1/3 cups of water.</p> <p>To protect the disinfectant properties, store it in a non transparent container, avoid exposure to light. Remix daily for maximum effectiveness.</p> <p>Surface sprays containing bleach are a good alternative.</p> <p>Surface disinfecting wipes with bleach are also suitable.</p>	<p>Disinfection of surfaces and objects that may be contaminated.</p>	<p>Should be used in well ventilated areas.</p> <p>Gloves and protective clothing are required while handling undiluted bleach.</p> <p>DO NOT mix with strong acids or ammonium based products to avoid releasing noxious fumes.</p> <p>Corrosive to metals.</p>
<p>70% Isopropyl or rubbing alcohol is a good alternative to bleach.</p> <p>An alcohol based antibacterial hand sanitizer may be used for cleaning hands and exposed skin.</p>	<p>Smooth metal surfaces, table tops, and other surfaces on which bleach cannot be used.</p>	<p>Flammable and toxic. Should be used in well ventilated areas. Avoid inhalation.</p> <p>Keep away from heat sources, electrical equipment and outlets, flames and hot surfaces.</p>

Supplies for Home Influenza Care

It is important to add these items to your emergency kits at home in case of influenza outbreak or pandemic.



- **Electronic digital thermometer.** Information on how to use and clean your thermometer is included on page 7 of this toolkit.



- **Alcohol wipes or 70% Isopropyl or rubbing alcohol and cotton balls** to clean the thermometer.



- **Fever reducing medication** such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Take as directed.



- **Juices & liquids.** Hydration is important.



- **Bleach.** Formula for disinfecting common surfaces on page 8.



- **Plastic or paper utensils, plates, cups and napkins** to avoid the need to wash dishes used by a person with influenza.



- **Tissues** in order to contain respiratory secretions. Dispose in the nearest waste receptacle after use.
- **Soap and water** for hand washing.
- **Hand sanitizer** to be used when soap and water are not available.
- **Trash bags** to dispose of waste products that may be contaminated.
- **Surgical or procedural mask with ties** for everyone in the household.
- **Cough suppressants** like medicines containing dextromethorphan.
- **List of resources in your community** you can turn to for help.

Self-Triage Algorithm For Persons Having Influenza Symptoms

The symptoms of influenza are:

- Fever — low (99 °F) to high (104 °F), usually for three days, but may persist for four to eight days. Sometimes fever will go away and return a day later.
- Aching muscles
- Cough
- Headache
- Joint aches
- Eye pain
- Feeling very cold or having shaking chills
- Feeling very tired
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

If you have some of these symptoms:

Stay home

- Rest
- Drink fluids
- Take fever reducers (acetaminophen or ibuprofen)

But IF you



- Are unable to drink enough fluids (urine becomes dark; feeling dizzy when standing)
- Have the fever for more than 3 to 5 days
- Feel better, then develop a fever again



CALL your health care provider

Or IF you



- Become short of breath or you develop wheezing
- Cough up blood
- Have pain in your chest with breathing
- Have heart disease (like angina or congestive heart failure) and you develop chest pain
- Become unable to walk or sit up, or function normally (others might notice this about you first)



GO IMMEDIATELY for care

How to Care for Someone with Influenza

During a severe influenza outbreak or pandemic, when people are infected worldwide, the media and local healthcare providers will tell residents how to obtain medical advice and care. **The following information is a general guide and is not intended to take the place of medical advice from a healthcare provider.**

Monitoring and Comfort

Keep a care log. Date, time and what is observed. Record the following information about the ill person at least once each day or more often as symptoms change. Include the date and time. (See Personal Care Log on page 14.)

- Check the person's temperature using a digital thermometer.
- Check the person's skin for color (pink, pale, or bluish) and rash.
- Record the approximate quantity of fluids consumed.
- Record the number of times the ill person urinates each day and the color of the urine (clear to light yellow, dark yellow, brown, or red).
- Record all medications taken, dosages and times given.



Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the ill person.

Remember that fever is a sign that the body is fighting the infection. It will go away as the person gets better. Sponging with lukewarm water may lower the person's temperature, but only during the period of sponging. **Do not sponge with alcohol.**

Watch for complications of influenza. Complications are common in individuals with health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and lung problems, but may occur with anyone who has the flu. **If the ill person develops any of the following symptoms, call your healthcare provider or the Panhandle Health District Medical Hotline:**

- Difficulty breathing or fast breathing
- Bluish color to the skin or lips
- Coughing up blood
- Signs of dehydration and cannot take enough fluid (see page 13)
- Difficulty responding or communicating appropriately or appears confused
- Convulsions or seizures
- Gets worse after appearing to improve
- Is an infant younger than 2 months old with fever, poor feeding, urinating less than 3 times per day, or other signs of illness

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How to Care for Someone with Influenza

Medications

Use ibuprofen such as Advil or Motrin brands, or acetaminophen such as Tylenol brand for fever, sore throat and general discomfort. **Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers** because it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life threatening illness.

Liquids and Nutrition

If the person **is not** vomiting, offer small amounts of liquids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if the person does not feel thirsty. If the ill person is not eating solid foods, include liquids that contain sugars and salts, such as broth or soups, sports drinks diluted half and half with water (Pedialyte brand), clear sodas, but not colas or drinks with high amounts of caffeine. Regular urination is a good sign of hydration.

Do not let the person drink alcohol or use tobacco, because they cause dehydration. Do not allow smoking in the house.

Recommended minimum daily liquid intake, if not eating solid foods:

Young children - 1½ oz. per pound of body weight per day (multiply 1.5 times the weight of the child). Examples:

- A 10 lb. child needs approximately 15 oz. fluid per day
- A 20 lb. child needs approximately 30 oz. fluid per day

Older children and adults - 1½ to 2½ quarts per day



Oral Rehydration Solution (Flu Brew)

The body needs to restore the lost fluid. The water, salt and sugar in the formula team up to speed the patient's recovery. The quantity of sugar in the Flu Brew can be varied depending on patient preference. It can be increased up to 4 tbsp or reduced to 2 tbsp if desired by the patient. For some people, the Flu Brew will taste too salty. In this case, increase the water content to 1.5 or even 2 quarts leaving the remainder of the formula unchanged.

- 1-quart clean water
- 1 level tsp table salt
- 3 tbsp table sugar

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How to Care for Someone with Influenza

If the person is vomiting, do not give any liquid or food by mouth for at least 1 hour. Let the stomach rest. Next, offer a clear liquid, such as water, “flu brew,” weak tea, clear sodas such as ginger ale, or broth in very small amounts. Start with 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of clear liquid every 10 minutes. If the person vomits, let the stomach rest again for an hour. Again, try to give small frequent amounts of clear liquid. When there is no vomiting, gradually increase the amount of liquid offered and use liquids that contain sugars and salts. After 6-8 hours of a liquid diet without vomiting, add solid food that is easy to digest, such as saltine crackers, dry toast, soup, mashed potatoes or rice. Gradually return to a regular diet.

Babies who are breast-fed and vomiting can continue to nurse. Let your baby nurse more often by breastfeeding for 4-5 minutes every 30-45 minutes. Or offer a ½ oz. or less at a time of Pedialyte brand on its own every 10 minutes in a bottle.

Watch for the following signs of dehydration or not drinking enough liquids:

- Weakness or unresponsiveness
- Decreased saliva or dry mouth and tongue
- Sunken eyes
- Skin tenting or turgor (Check this by picking up layers of skin between your thumb and forefinger and gently pinching for 1 second. If the person is dehydrated, the skin will “tent” or take 2 or more seconds to flatten out. This is best checked on the belly skin of a child and on the upper chest of an adult.)
- Infants: dehydration symptoms would be fewer than three wet diapers in the last 24 hours.
- Decreased output of urine, which becomes dark yellow in color from dehydration (Ill persons who are getting enough liquids should urinate at least every 8-12 hours.)

Dehydration in infants and the elderly can be especially dangerous. Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms continue to worsen.

Cough

Almost every patient with influenza develops a cough. A wet cough is one that produces phlegm or mucus while a dry one does not. Coughing serves several useful purposes. The most important is to help clear the breathing passageways. In this case, coughing is helpful. On the other hand, when the cough is caused by irritation on the delicate tissue lining the breathing passageways, then coughing can cause damage serving no useful purpose. A dry cough is the one you want to suppress. Good hydration is the best treatment for a cough, but cough suppressants, such as those medicines containing dextromethorphan can be used as directed on the package.

Influenza Care Log

(Fill out and bring to health care provider visits)

Name _____

Date	Time	Observations*	Temperature	Medications

*Any symptoms such as coughing, confusion, signs of dehydration, how the person looks, what the person is doing, liquids or foods taken since last observation.

Influenza Care Log

(Fill out and bring to health care provider visits)

Name _____

Date	Time	Observations*	Temperature	Medications

*Any symptoms such as coughing, confusion, signs of dehydration, how the person looks, what the person is doing, liquids or foods taken since last observation.

Returning to Work After Influenza Illness

Overview of Influenza (Flu) Virus Symptoms

Flu viruses are spread from person to person primarily through respiratory droplet transmission (for example when an infected person coughs or sneezes in close proximity, normally 3 feet or less to an infected person). The virus may also be spread through contact with infectious or contagious respiratory secretions on the hands of an infected person or by touching objects or surfaces contaminated with the virus.

The typical incubation period, the time between when a person is first exposed to an infectious disease to when signs and symptoms develop, for seasonal influenza is 1-4 days, with an average of 2 days. Adults can be infectious from the day before symptoms begin through approximately 5-7 days after illness onset. Children can be infectious for more than 10 days after the onset of symptoms. Severely immunocompromised persons can be infectious for weeks or months.



Current Criteria for Employees Returning to Work after Seasonal Influenza

Workers who have become ill with the flu should stay at home until all the following criteria are met:

- At least 5 days have passed since the symptoms of illness began; AND
- Fever has resolved and has not been present for at least 24 hours; AND
- Cough is improving and decreasing in frequency and amount of secretions with no associated chest discomfort or shortness of breath.

Upon returning to the work environment, employees should continue to follow cough etiquette and hand washing protocols. (See *Cover Your Cough* on page 4, and *Wash Your Hands* on page 5.)

Criteria for Pandemic Influenza

Experts do not know whether the mode of transmission, incubation period, or contagious period of a pandemic flu virus will be similar to those of seasonal influenza. Because of this, employers must be alert to specific recommendations from Panhandle Health District during an influenza pandemic. Management of illness in the workplace, including when it is safe for workers to return to work, will be communicated through various media as necessary.

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov

Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy

www.pandemicpractices.org

Idaho Care Line 211

<http://www.idahocareline.org>

Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management

www.co.kootenai.id.us/departments/disaster/

Panhandle Health District

www.phd1.idaho.gov

U.S. Government Website for Pandemic Influenza

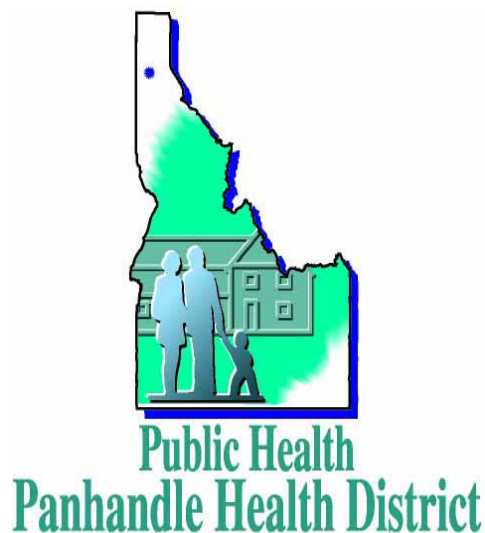
www.pandemicflu.gov

World Health Organization

www.who.org

Other support resources by County to be developed “just in time” to include:

- Other Community Assistance Centers Contact Information
- Flu Clinic Contact Information
- Mortuary Services
- Medical Hotline/Regional Telecom Center



Healthy People in Healthy Communities